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No Poverty - a project by Yasmeeen Elkhatab - Story on pages 4
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ALBERTA STREET NEWS

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Alberta Street News needs funding to continue publication

By Linda Dumont

Over the past year, it has been possible to continue publication of Alberta Street News through the generous monthly donation of \$500 a month from an anonymous donor, and through ads placed by City councillors Michael Walters and Ben Henderson and a few other ads. Since January, the \$500 a month has been the only money coming in aside from paper sales. That ended in March. For the April issue, city councillors have placed an ad (see page 16) but the \$500 does not pay the whole cost of printing, which is \$646.76 per issue.

Paper sales money brings in enough to cover the cost of mail outs, stamps, vendor tags, printing ink, office supplies and distribution. The paper is produced through the work of volunteer writers, and the volunteer editor/designer (Linda Dumont). The only people making money from Alberta Street News are the vendors and the distribution person. The paper is running at a loss that is made up by Dumont.

To be able to continue publication we need your help. You can do so through a monthly donation of any amount or a one time donation, or through placing ad or an ongoing monthly ad.

If you would like to contribute in some way, contact Linda Dumont at 780-428-0805 or dumontlc@hotmail.com.

THE VIEWS PRESENTED ARE THOSE OF THE CONTRIBUTORS.

Electoral reform is essential for social justice

By Timothy Wild

The recent announcement by Team Trudeau declaring that electoral reform is no longer a priority for the federal government can come as a surprise to no one. The current first-past-the-post system has made the Liberals amongst the most electorally successful parties in the Western democratic world. It was only the shock of falling out of power for almost 10 years and becoming the third party that caused the Liberal Party of Canada to rethink their unqualified commitment to this antiquated voting system.

However, as they have done so many times before, the Liberals whispered seductively while in opposition and on the campaign trail, and then ignored some of their more progressive promises in the sober light of office. In terms of electoral promise breaking, "2015 will be the last federal election conducted under the first past-the-post voting system" is right up there with that gem from south of the border "Read my lips: no new taxes". Moreover, it is similar to past Liberal promises not to impose wage and prices controls in the 1970s, and Jean Chretien's promises regarding the ending of Free Trade with the United States and the GST.

But this particular decision is especially cynical and will have far-reaching, negative consequences on the life chances and choices of our fellow citizens surviving, unnecessarily, on the social, cultural and economic margins. Electoral reform would have allowed for a greater diversity of voices and opinions to be represented in both

the House of Commons and the Senate, and this manifestation of pluralism would then have led to more inclusive, effective and transformative public policy – surely the aim of a postindustrial democratic society?

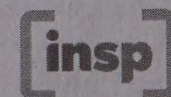
And given these divisive times, we need more locations for differences to be worked out in a respectful manner. Democracy has to be tentative, and ideas have to be considered in the open. But, in many ways, politics these days is about shutting down debate rather than encouraging lively discourse. Instead of taking on collective issues and working them out, there seems to be more emphasis on personal attacks and actively taking issues off the public policy table... and leaving them to the secret revenge of the ballot box. I think the victory of Donald Trump is the ultimate example of that. Blue collar workers voted for him based on their economic and cultural alienation from the elitist and liberal Democratic Party, when clearly he is the champion of the 1%. He will not help working class folks. In many ways, Trump is the victory of pure and simple capitalist accumulation. The vitriol of the campaign, void of real debate, led to looking at politics from the perspective of self interest as opposed to providing a vision of how politics could be, and should be, inclusive, compassionate, respectful and visionary. I believe that proportional representation would help provide this context.

The Australian Senate is elected by a system, for example, to ensure a body that more accurately reflects the views of the elector-

ate. Certainly, in the most recent election, this didn't happen quite as I would have liked. There was a resurgence of the anti-immigrant, populist and nativist One Nation Party. But now it is out in the open and I think that people will get the opportunity to see what that party stands for, and hold them to account at the next election. Opening up debate is essential.

But turning back to Canada, electoral reform would have ensured that more voices were represented at the policy making table, which is essential for effective public policy. Then we could have gotten away from the boring grey mass of centrism, or the false promise of populism and exclusion. Trudeau's reversion will not support that. As a result, green and other progressive voices will be largely marginalized, if not silenced. This is both unhealthy and unjust.

Mr. Trudeau had a wonderful opportunity to broaden the circle of participation and opportunity; yet he threw it aside when it didn't suit his party's short-term electoral purposes. Sadly, ordinary people will pay the price for this short-sighted, yet predictable and elitist arrogance. But, as noted, we have seen this from the Liberals many times before as we trusted them to fulfill their promises only to be disappointed. As the folk-singer and activist Pete Seeger sang, "when will we ever learn?"



International
Network of
Street Papers

No Poverty



High School student Yasmeen Elkhatab donated back packs with personal care items inside to *Alberta Street News* vendors.

She was working on a school project for No Poverty. Above: Clockwise - Phillip Dainard, Dale Ferris, Vivian Risby and Bill Cun-

ningham with their backpack at the Strathcona Farmers' Market. Other vendors picked up back packs at MacDonald Lofts.

DANCE: A Hawaiian Holiday

By Raven

Hula on the prairies transported to us to much warmer place on Feb 25th 2017 at Gelengarry community hall in Edmonton Alberta. Hosted by "Hawaiian Holiday" under the direction of Tracey Thorne the performers entranced the audience with a show of Hawaiian and Polynesian dances, chants, and music.

It was stunning to see a very authentic representation of those cultures. You were not only entertained but you learned some history behind some of the dances....

"Cultural dances aren't just doing the steps; they are about telling stories and sharing the culture," said Tracey Thorne.

A Hawaiian Holiday is very much a well-polished power house troop that I would hire in a heartbeat. The dancers

where in perfect sync with amazing costuming, beautiful voices and meaningful movement and gestures. This was the only show that my 16 year old son asked to come see with me - ever. We talked in between dances and he remarked how much he loved the music and the live drumming. We both enjoyed the food prepared in Hawaiian style that was catered by Cornerstone BBQ & Spice. We both enjoyed dancers of all ages and were amazed at the five poi dance. We talked for a good hour afterwards and shared with each other our favourite parts of the show. The best part of it was that he asked if we could go and see them next time they performed.

Thank you to all the dancers from across Alberta and B.C who entertained us... Aloha nui loa!

Tracey Thorne has been dancing since she was a young child when she learned classical stage dances - tap, jazz, and ballet, and her teacher also taught Hawaiian Hula. She then trained at the Polynesian Cultural Centre in O'hahu with some of the masters of Polenisian dance. In her 20's she started a dance school that she ran for 20 years, as well as performing.

Thorne said, "It got too big so I shut down the school to concentrate on my performing troupe. I still teach my regular classes but no longer have a big dance school."

Her students are learning Polenieian dance, and most are adults.

She said, "There is a lot of interest in Polenesian dance and culture so we brought everything together for a day of Aloha Spirit. There were workshops by Master Kumu Paul Travae Lota."



Where's the fire? Ask Cindy Blackstock

By Allan Sheppard

Seven per cent of all children under 14 in Canada are Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, Metis). For comparison, Statistics Canada sets the proportion of Indigenous peoples of all ages in Canada at 4.3 per cent. Indigenous families and communities are significantly younger than average.

It's easy to understand, from those numbers, why Canada's Indigenous population is burgeoning, as a percentage of the whole. It's also easy to understand why Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, and other advocates are so outspoken, so diligent, so persistent—so desperate, in so many ways—in their advocacy for expanded and improved child welfare services for Indigenous children. While the current federal government, under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett, talks a better line than its Stephen-Harper led predecessor, its walk is not as sunny as Blackstock and others want—and what Indigenous children clearly need, in comparison to the support available to other children.

While the Trudeau government pledged in its 2016 budget to spend \$634.8 million over five years on child and family services, that kind of multi-year budgeting allows the government (not differently than recent predecessors in that respect) to play a kind of shell game with the amounts it spends in any given year on budget line items.

A year after that 2016 budget, the government has spent barely half of the \$100 million that it might have spent if it had pro-rated its global allotment equally over five years. Bennett argues that the government wants to do the job right; it is taking time for due planning diligence. That's not unreasonable; neither are the obvious skepticism, frustration, and disappointment expressed by Blackstock

and others, who have heard such things many times before and have been taught by hard experience to do their own due advocacy diligence.

They are trying to hold the government and its leaders accountable. That is necessary and honourable work. Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Bennett might not thank them for it; we should.

National and provincial/territorial statistics for children in care get at the heart of the issue, the challenges that governments face, and the cause for desperate concern that is felt in Indigenous communities and by their leaders.

Consider perhaps the most glaring example: the statistics for Indigenous children in foster care.

While Indigenous children comprise a disproportionate 7 per cent of Canada's under-14 population, in 2011 they comprised a staggering 44 per cent—not far short of half—of all children in foster care. (There is no reason to believe the numbers are any less daunting six years later; they could be even be worse: more than sufficient reason for Blackstock and other advocates to press on diligently.)

Eastern provinces have nothing to be proud of, but they all registered less than 30 per cent of their foster-care population as Indigenous. Prince Edward had none, due presumably to a tiny Indigenous population; Quebec looked by far the best at 15.4 per cent. (Quebec has significant First Nations and Inuit populations, so there might be lessons to be learned there for the federal and other provincial and territorial governments.)

The northern territories—Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut have—have substantial or majority Indigenous populations, so it should not surprise us that they had the highest proportions of Indigenous children in care: 93.5 per cent in Northwest Territories and 100 per cent in Yukon

and Nunavut.

The statistics are not flattering for Alberta—or indeed for any of the four western provinces, which are the shameful outliers in terms of children apprehended into care from Indigenous families and communities. British Columbia, at 56 per cent (well above the unacceptable national average) seems almost respectable compared to Saskatchewan (87 per cent), Manitoba (84.6 per cent), and Alberta (73.4 per cent).

If we look at the statistics through a cultural lens, we see that New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador placed an almost respectable 70 per cent of their foster children in Indigenous homes. Alberta lagged far behind with an embarrassing 29 per. The statistics I have access to do not say how many Indigenous homes that accepted children in 2011 were in Indigenous communities, where the children would be further exposed to cultural influences. That too is surely important: a critical mass is helpful in any transmission of cultural norms and practices, especially language.

I don't offer these statistics to argue that children from Indigenous families and communities should not be placed in foster care. I accept the fact that child welfare authorities and workers generally do not apprehend children unless they consider them to be at serious risk of physical or emotional injury.

Nor do I want to argue that Indigenous children should never be placed in non-Indigenous homes and communities; when children are at risk, close and quick access to secure and safe placement must be a higher priority than cultural compatibility—at least for the short term. I am aware that Indigenous children in care have come to harm in Indigenous families (often in so-called “kinship care” provided by extended-family members) and communities.

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Culturally sensitive and compatible care options are not a magic-bullet solution for all failures and injustices of child welfare for Indigenous families and communities; they are however, logically necessary components in any viable strategy to preserve the cultural integrity of Indigenous communities in ways that acknowledge and appreciate the reality that safety and security have cultural dimensions.

In the short term, the only priority, when children are found legitimately to be at risk, must be their immediate safety and security; legitimacy in such matters being established, in my view, by community participation in assessment, decision-making, follow-up, and evaluation processes. In the long term, once any immediate crisis has been resolved, cultural concerns must rise in priority: not as a watering down of safety and security concerns, but as an enhancement of them.

And there, sad to say, lies the rub: the subtle and (sometimes) not-to-subtle barriers to a system that pays as much respect to cultural and community concerns as it does to the needs of individual Indigenous children.

Too many Indigenous families and communities lack the capacity and resources to take proper care of their children in terms of physical and cultural safety and security. Why?

Why are so many Indigenous families not able to give their children safe, secure, culturally sensitive care?

Why, when the family life breaks

down (as it does in all communities, not just Indigenous ones), are there not enough qualified and experienced foster parents, kinship parents, and other resources in Indigenous communities to provide safe, secure, culturally sensitive care?

Indigenous leaders are telling us their house is on fire. A fire service that needs five years to respond is not good enough.

As the parent, first foster, then adoptive, of two children from Indigenous backgrounds; as grandparent to eight of my sons' children; and as a close friend of leaders and members of a small Indigenous community in northern B.C., I have personal and anecdotal experience of the some of the ways Indigenous families and communities break down and how their struggles to cope and adapt too often fall short of their own expectations, to say nothing of the often uninformed and prejudiced expectations of non-Indigenous Canadians.

I have some observations and suggestions that might help, but this is not the place for them. The last thing Indigenous communities and leaders need is more gratuitous advice from non-Indigenous Canadians, however informed and sympathetic they might think they are.

If asked, I will share my thoughts. Otherwise, I will leave it to passionate, thoughtful, and moderate (yes, moderate) advocates like Cindy Blackstock to press on diligently in the face of government indifference and inaction that, I believe, reflect apathy and indifference among Canadians, too many of whom remain wilfully ignorant of the issues—and the true costs of not addressing them.

No one—certainly no one in government or the Indian Act bureaucracy—needs me to tell them what needs to do and how. The 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission headed by former justice, now senator, Murray Sinclair, are a good place to start.

Prime Minister Trudeau and his government take a far more informed and sensitive line in their dealings with Indigenous communities than their predecessors. That is a welcome change. But talk is cheap.

Action has costs, in money and potentially in support. Until we have a government in Ottawa that is willing to take the risk of meaningful action—in other words, true leadership—nothing much will change.

Cindy Blackstock and other Indigenous leaders are telling us their house is on fire. A fire service that needs five years to respond is not good enough.

(Statistical information sourced from Where the kids are: How indigenous children are over-represented in foster care, The Globe and Mail on line, updated APR. 18, 2016 8:49 AM EDT; tinyurl.com/kl6lrg.)

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Cost: \$10 per person or a minimum charge of \$40 for fewer than four persons.

Call Linda to arrange a time for your tour.

780-428-0805 or email Linda at dumontlc@hotmail.com



Black Sheep

By Sharon Spencer

How your family perceives you can really affect your self image. They are the first ones that set the standard as to how you feel about yourself. This happens very early in our developmental stage.

We come into this world wanting only two things; Love and Acceptance. The very first ones we need to be loved and accepted by are our immediate family. If for some reason this does not happen the uncensored core of our being or personal self image becomes damaged. We have a distorted view of our worthiness. If it is not broken we will continue in this line of thinking, allowing devastating choices we make through having had incomplete parenting and

poor role models to base our decisions on.

I was always a different kind of kid. I danced to the beat of my own drummer. I have always felt I was the black sheep of the family; the one they didn't know what to do with; the one that was

constantly an embarrassment to them.

I was the one they felt sorry for but they would buy me stuff just so I would stay out of their way, some perhaps more than others. Because of the messages and dysfunctional behaviour surrounding me I became what the world thought of me.

I was broken and they didn't have a simple solution to fix me. We all were stuck in dysfunctional behaviours, playing our separate roles. Tell me something - were you the black sheep in your family?

I struggled with pain and addictions a good part of my life just trying to deal with my distorted personal truth. Then I met Jesus,

the restorer of truth in my life. Guess what? There are no black sheep in Jesus family. He's the Good Sheppard, who laid down his life for the sheep. Yeah, that's me and you. I entered his flock by the blood of Jesus. He forgave me my sins and he loved me unconditionally. He and his family love me. It's taken a lifetime to unravel the devil's lies and my wrong perceptions but together, hand in hand, we strive towards wholeness. It is a journey you don't have to make alone. If you have no family he will build one around you.

The bible says When my Father and Mother forsake me the Lord will take me up. Psalm 27:10. Are you alone and in pain not knowing where to go? Cry out to Jesus. He'll take you in. He is only one who understands your sin and predicament. He knew you before you were born and had a plan for you before the devil messed it up. Cry out. Repent for your sin and he, the son of God, will come in and be your guide. Man, he loves sheep! Even black ones!

Inside My Cruffin

By Gily Ro

Elusive sweetness
Of croissant-muffin dough
Tartness of raspberry
Sweet firm blueberries
Creamy icing and swirls of chocolate
Rolled in crunchy sugar
Paired with the calming flavour of green tea
And good company.

My Favourtie place

By Gily Ro

My favourite place is neutral
It's the safest place to be
If you're placed in neutral
You can go up or down you see
If you're up the only way is down
And when you're down
It's difficult to get up and go
So maybe you can see
Why neutral is my favourite place to be

Camping

By Marjorie Thompson

Camping is fun. It's a great holiday from real life. I used to go camping. I would see the trees thick with the darkest of green pine needles swaying in the gentlest breeze that barely danced across my skin and saw how the sun would shine through the branches of the poplar or birch trees and leave their black shadows on the ground.

When I was camping I would go for a swim in the lake that was blue with ripples from the wind and the water was swimming pool warm and wet and cooling to my sun warmed skin. I would do the dog paddling as my swimming skills were not great and I would also dunk my head underwater to see if I could see under the water that was sometimes murky. The sun's rays would make it so you could see the things floating on the surface of the water. I would dive from my feet and pick up rocks from the sandy bottom.

When I wasn't swimming I would go on hikes in the woods with all kinds of trees. As I was walking on the black dirt, trees roots would trip

me up but I was okay. The smell of the pine trees would remind me of the air freshener in the car but better smelling. The sound of the trees was hypnotic like a musical and the smell of the dirt like mossy earth that was freshly put there. The snapping of the twigs underfoot was music to my ears. The birds chirping and loons on the lake were a pretty sight and the sound they made calling out to each other was eerie. A mallard body gliding on the lake by the brownish weeds was a sight to see.

My favourite foods while camping were hot dogs and marshmallows done over a fire that was ashes that were grey and logs that were burnt black with a few areas of red coals and wisps of smoke and some orange flames that were hot. I would sit on a lawn chair of white plastic and burn my hotdog black on purpose so the crunch of the hotdog was at its best. The smell of wood burning was relaxing and the snapping of the logs in the fire was hypnotic. I wish I could camp

HEALING WORDS



BY THE CMHA
WRITING FOR RECOVERY GROUP

for the rest of my life as it is so fun. Going to sleep at night was like sleeping in a symphony of sound.



Ultimate Love

Sent in by Linda Roan

In the Christian story, God descends to re-ascend. He comes down.....down from the heights of absolute being into time and space, down to humanity...down to the very roots and sea-bed of the Nature He has created.

But He goes down to come up again and bring the ruined world up with Him. One has the picture of a strong man stooping lower and lower to get himself underneath some great complicated burden. He must stoop in order to lift, he must almost disappear under the load before he incredibly straightens his back and marches off with the whole mass swaying on his shoulders.

In this descent and re-ascent everyone will recognize the familiar

pattern: a thing written all over the world. It is the pattern of all vegetable life. It must belittle itself into something hard, small, and death-like, it must fall into the ground... then, the new life re-ascends. So it is also in our moral and emotional life. The first innocent and spontaneous desires have to submit to the deathlike process of control or total denial, but from that there is a re-ascent to fully formed character in which the strength of the original material all operates but in a new way. Death and Rebirth...go down to go up. It is the key principle. Through this bottleneck, this belittlement, the highroad nearly always lies.

What C.S. Lewis described so eloquently, God did for us . Jesus

The Homeless; used, abused, and accused.

Christ, God's only Son, left His exalted place with God the Father and humiliated Himself to become a man that He might carry out God's plan of salvation. Jesus Christ, the very Creator and Sustainer of the universe condescended or belittled Himself to become a creature so that He could save those who would come to Him. He carried a massive, heavy weight of sin. " He Himself bore our sins" (1 Peter 2:24) Ultimate Love did not stop at His humiliation however. Jesus himself re-ascended. Death could not hold Him. Jesus blazed the trail so that like Him, as we go through death, we come out the other side. Jesus Christ, God's only Son, conquered the last enemy, death. This is Ultimate Love.

Not just one of the crowd

by Angelique Branston

I can remember being told many times as a child that just because my friends were doing something didn't mean that I had to do it, too. As well the famous saying goes that if all my friends jumped off a bridge would i follow suit? Though it seems to me that as an adult or should i say as a human, there seems to be this ever present need to be a part of the group. We learn to live in the eyes of others while hopefully showing a little bit of our own personality too. There is a saying from Japan that the nail that sticks out gets hammered down. I used to think it such a cold saying, but I have realized instead that is is a saying based on observation. A good example of this is the newer movie Hacksaw Ridge about the passivist who joined the army and because he continuously

refused to join the pack, he was given the right to live with his convictions and live as a medical person in the army without bearing arms. Though it is safer to blend in with society there are times in each of our lives that arise in which we have to decide whether our conviction or belief in something is worth standing apart from the crowd for. Most of us recieve no medals for being true to ourselves. In fact usually the only reward is ostrasization from the pack that we had belonged to, or at the very least a nice talking to by someone who cares about us. When we leave this world though, it is what we did that matters for we can take nothing with us when we go. All that we leave behind is the memorry, good or bad, of what we did and how we chose to live our life. So whether we follow the crowd or march to the beat of own drum, we must always remember that we are solely responsible for those choices.



Angelique Branston with Spot

And a Happy Easter to You, too

By Joanne Benger

1. I can't understand why we have an Easter but no Wester.
2. Did Dr. Sues eat green eggs and ham on Easter Day?
3. If tulips have two lips, how many lips do mint juleps have?
4. We always had lamb with mint sauce for Easter, but now the lamb is on the lam so we have Easter turkey.
5. Do Easter chicks watch chick flicks?
6. It's strange that Easter rabbits hop along but never hop ashort.
7. Why can't we hear the peeps of marshmallow peeps?
8. You don't need a gun for an Easter egg hunt.
9. eeeee- lilies (lil-eeee)
10. Easter lilies are white but white Easter eggs are coloured.
11. Why was the hot cross bun cross?
12. If hot cross buns became cold, what do we call them?
13. Is it still Easter Sunday if the sun doesn't shine and the wind is a wester?
14. This year our Easter occurs on the same day as the Orthodox Easter (Pascha). Is that a double date?
15. I wonder how a chocolate bunny gets to lay coloured eggs?
16. If I put a bun on my knee, will I have an Easter bunny?
17. Lent is over - who was the lender and what did he lend?
18. If everyone gave up sweets for Lent, would the price of sugar drop?
19. I get a new Eater outfit, but never an infit.
20. I wonder why we all say Merry Christmas, but Happy Easter. Why not Merry Easter?
21. And I wish a Merry Easter to you, one and all.



The glorious month of April

By Joanne Benger

1. April 1st is April fool's Day but only until noon. After that it is Tailpike Day. Pin a tail on someone without them knowing.
2. April 2nd is World Autism Day. President Trump is an anti-vaxxer.
3. April 3rd, the first Monday in April, marks the birth of Cain and the death of Abel. It is an unlucky day. Stay in bed.
4. Wear a daffodil in April to promote Cancer Awareness.
5. April 7th is World Health Day. Let's drink to your health.
6. The second week of April is smile week, National Dental hygienists week. Don't forget to brush and floss.
7. April 8th is the eve of Palm Sunday. Russian orthodox people prepared for their Easter confessions by going around their home and the community asking for forgiveness for sins they had committed knowingly and unknowingly, including actions, words and even unspoken thoughts.
8. April 9th is the anniversary of Vimy Ridge as well as Palm Sunday.
9. April 10 is International Safety Pin Day. Wear your jewellery made of safety pins.
10. April is Parkinson Disease Month and April 11th is World Parkinson Day.
11. April 11th is Passover. The last supper took place at Passover.
12. Remember Terry Fox who began his Marathon of Hope on April 12, 1980.
13. April 13 is Maundy Thursday when food for the poor was distributed in baskets. called maunds.
14. April 14th is Punjabi New Year. Happy New Year.
15. April 14th is Good Friday. Three o'clock is believed to be the time of Christ's death.
16. April 15 is Holy Saturday. Lent ends at midnight.
17. April 16 is Easter Sunday. Wear three new garments and you'll have a lucky year.
18. April 20th is 4-20, which is Mary Jane Reefer Recreation Use Day. Our P.M. will tell us what to do.
19. Queen Elizabeth 2nd was born April 21, 1926. Happy Birthday to your majesty.
20. April 21 is National Holocaust Day in Israel. They have two minutes of silence.
21. April 21 is National Ding-Free Day.
22. April 22nd is Earth Day. Walk a little lighter on the earth.
23. April 24th is Armenian Genocide Memorial Day.
24. April ends with April 30th. National Honesty Day n the U.S.

A Broken Child

By Maria B.

I want to dedicate this history to a little girl that was put in our journey in life. With her presence, she was able to make us realize how important it is to get involved and take the opportunity to change the life of a child.

What is a broken child? It is one that has been abandoned, has been neglected and has been denied the love, the trust and the safety that they rightly deserve. In every broken child there is a revealing trail of abuse and neglect that marks every step they take. They go through life in a silent and invisible way trying to pass unperceived; they become the silent shadows of society. Within time these children start blaming themselves, thinking that they are faulty and that everything that happens to them is their own fault.

In my journey as a mother, my youngest child brought an eight year old to our house. She was pleasant but she wore the signs of neglect. One time she told me that she had a step-mother and her step-mother was very mean to her. I asked what she did to her and she stated that she used to grab her by the hair and drag her down the stairs.

I told this child that I felt that was not right and we left it like that. She had no problem with that, she did not mention it again but in my mind it really bothered me because I felt this was a horrible way to treat a little girl. I am able to recognize now that fear impeded me from getting involved but I got the number of Social Services and I told her that the next time her step mother did that, she should call them and she said O.K.

Now I realize that I was giving an immense responsibility to a little child.

Within two days, the step mother asked me to come to her house and after deciding that I wanted to help this child, I did go. The stepmother just wanted me to know what a liar this little girl was, that she was a thief

and that she was always stealing her things. She took me to the room where this little girl slept and showed me her closet, just so I could see that she had everything.

To this day I cannot even picture what I saw or what I missed but there was one thing that made an impact in my life, and it was the knowledge that this little girl was not loved. How could she be loved or/and appreciated, when they were objectifying her and identifying her as a THIEF AND A LIAR?

I told my daughter what had happened and we realized that this girl needed us in her life; she became my daughter's best friend. They went to the same school and they protected each other in the school.

The little girl knew that she was welcome in our home. In later years, not been able to continue living in her home, she came to live with us. My daughter was working and if she would buy a pair of running shoes for herself, she made sure to purchase a pair for the girl. If my daughter purchased a pair of jeans, she made sure she also purchased a pair for the girl.

The only thing that was asked from the girl was to follow the rules of our household but her dad started to threaten us. She chose to go with her sister for coffee and after that she went to her own home. We were sad to see her gone but there was nothing we could do any more. Eventually she came back but she had changed and I could not go through the same thing again.

One thing I noticed is that gratefulness was not even in the picture. She continued being a friend of my daughter and I believe they will be friends forever but not even once did she ever said thanks for what you guys did for me. The years have passed and I haven't heard those words and probably I will never hear them.

I had heard that family only exists if you are blood and this is such a fallacy because family is where people love you unconditionally and they accept



you just for who you are. There are not very many people that would have gone out of their way to help the girl for years. I did things for her that were very important and she knew her family would never have gone that extra mile to do them for her.

When you open your doors to help a child, it is not only opening the door but opening your heart, giving them your time, accepting them and loving them. I must admit that I feel I have been painfully stung by ingratitude and at the same time I must recognize that for some reason, the girl might not be able to recognize what we did for her. Do some people tend to believe that benefits are self-bestowed and that benefits are also experienced as an entitlement or even a right? Do they have such a fragile self esteem that to feel gratitude is seen as a weakness?

As for myself I have learned: That TRUE GENEROSITY IS WHEN YOU CAN ACCEPT INGRATITUDE AND LIVE IN PEACE WITH YOURSELF. I KNOW WHAT IT MEANT FOR ME TO HELP HER AND MOST IMPORTANTLY WHAT IT MEANT FOR ME TO HAVE HER IN MY LIFE.

I do thank God for putting this little girl in my life and I am grateful that my whole family were there for her and were able to give her the incredible gift of BELONGING AND A SAFE HOME.

House of Refuge Mission opens inner city drop in



By Linda Dumont
Photos by Colin Chong

After more than three years without a building to work from, the House of Refuge Mission has opened a drop in in Edmonton's inner city. This was made possible through a Christian businessman who owns a house located at 10548-96 Street. He has renovated and prepared the rear area facing the alley for the use of the Mission.

The Mission will use this space as a place for people to come in off the street and have a warm place to sit and have coffee or tea and talk. They

will not be serving food so the numbers should be light. A portable toilet in the back yard will be in use during the times when the Mission House is open. The portable toilet is locked and secured when not required.

People enter in from the alley and enter through the back entrance. The Mission is open from 5:30 to 9 every evening, with bible studies some evenings as well as a Sunday evening church service starting at 7 p.m.

People who require clothing and/or food will continue to go to the alley beside Edmonton Cash Register where the House of Refuge Mission has been distributing food and

clothing every evening at 6 p.m. for the since the building on the corner 95 Street and 103A Avenue burned down in October, 2013. Food is picked up from stores and the Edmonton Food Bank.

The House of Refuge Mission is a Christian based independently run Inner-City Gospel Mission that is not affiliated with any church organization, None of their workers receive any remuneration – it's totally run by volunteers.

To learn more about the House of Refuge Mission or to make a donation go to www.refugemission.com



Giving back is what makes this man tick

By John Zapantis

Success is not only measured by personal gain for some people, but by how much the person can give back, helping to make a big difference while helping to improve the quality of life for people.

One individual, who certainly has lived up to that testament of truth, is Joseph Lizotte an Edmonton dentist, who is a compassionate married man and father of three girls and a proud member of the West Edmonton Rotary Club.

The veteran dentist was born in Edmonton and raised by caring and supportive parents. His father's moral example in working hard as a successful businessman and his mother's strong work ethic, influenced a young Joseph's determination to reach his goal as a successful and productive dentist.

In an interview with ASN, the dedicated dentist, who owns and operates his own dental practice, elaborated on his successful climb in dentistry, parenting and his volunteering as a Rotarian.

When Joseph Lizotte reached the ninth grade during his junior high school years, he was considered a middle of the road student. While walking back to his school at McKernan Junior High, a classmate asked him if he'd be interested in tagging along in attending a career day at the U of A.

Lizotte said, "I ran into a classmate, who was going to the university and said he was going to dentistry and asked if I wanted to tag along. Then when I went there and saw the work they were doing it seemed fascinating. I saw that they were really interactive

with patients and that was very challenging. That's when I decided that was the path I was going to go down."

After he graduated from high school, the prerequisites for enrolment into dental school required that he do two years of science. He actually surpassed the minimum two years required by studying for three years instead. He successfully obtained his Bachelor of Science degree. Once he completed his three year dental studies program, he was also required to pursue his General Practice Residency (G.P.R.) at the University Hospital. That additional training gave him the opportunity to improve his dental skills.

After completing his G.P.R. as a certified dentist, he went on to secure dental employment as an associate working with another dental firm from 1991 to 1996. While working with this dental practice, Lizotte was encouraged to buy into this practice as a business partner.

Soon marriage was in the picture. Joseph hit it off with the woman of his dreams, and was attracted to her intelligence, charm and outgoing personality. The two eventually married and later had three children. To this day, the three girls are doing well in school and continue to live up to the ethics and values taught by their parents.

Despite a successful dental career, Lizotte been a great benefit, while parenting his three girls and is unconditional in his support for them. He said, "My wife and I want them to focus on academics, to try to get the best grades

they can and determine the things they are passionate about, that they really like, that they really want to achieve. Then you carry on down that path. So, really only one of them is showing interest at all in the dental field. She's kind of interested in becoming an orthodontist - the people who straighten teeth."

His dental career seems to have had an immense influence on his daughter's passion for entering the field, but he denies this and claims it's entirely her doing. Lizotte said, "Her older sister one day was having braces done. She had to tag along for all the appointments. She got to meet the orthodontist and really liked the orthodontist a lot. She learned a lot about what they do. She spent a little bit of time shadowing in their office. That's how she decided. So it really wasn't my direct influence at all."

Joseph Lizotte doesn't ever recall any obstacles faced during his first day while working as a dentist. He attributes the successful start to his prior residency at the hospital, while working towards his General Practice Residency (G.P.R.) Lizotte said, "I was very fortunate on my very first day as a dentist in private practice, because I already had the year's residency in the hospital. So it actually went remarkably smoothly. The things we were doing in regular practice were actually considerably easier than what we were doing at the hospital. So it was a pretty smooth easy transition."

Lizotte has had his share of nervous patients who've shown apprehensive signs of nervousness, while questioning the consequences of

freezing, just before cleaning teeth, doing extractions and fillings. His method in calming patients works through a number of options.

Lizotte said, "There are other sedative techniques. Some dentists are trained in doing higher levels of sedation as well, but we find for the vast majority of people, just a calming approach, but maybe for some people a bit of nitrous oxide on top of it and that does the trick. For other people we refer them out of the office to someone who does the deeper level of sedation, or even in general an anaesthetic."

Lazotte's been fortunate to have had no problems with his work on patients, but he recalls a time when some emergency work needed to be done on one patient, while he was working towards his G.P.R. at the University Hospital. Lizotte said, "One time when I was a resident working in the hospital, I was called in to treat a patient, who had suffered a terrific fall on their face that pushed in their teeth, rather than them being knocked out. Their teeth got pushed right up deeper into their sockets, so we had to freeze them up really well so that it was good and comfortable. We then moved the teeth into the proper position. It worked out really well. We just use local anaesthetic and there were some little forceps that you'd normally use for extracting teeth. We just used them to grab onto the teeth and pull them into position. By the time we were done it took probably a couple of hours."

Lizotte loves the people that he serves, while enjoying the daily challenges of working on client's teeth that leaves them walking out of his office with smiles that tells him he's appreciated. Lizotte said, "I think it's a tremendous profes-

sion. I think it's one of the ones, where you help people out in a way that really impacts their lives in a positive way. People are more confident with their smile. They're more comfortable. They eat better. So it really does enhance their quality of life."

When not working at his dental practice, he works as a Rotarian and has been a member of the West Edmonton Rotary Club for over 20 years. The popular international fund raising organization has been in existence since 1905, established by its founder, Paul Harris, where his international headquarters started in Chicago. The club is notable for helping to conduct fundraising activities that include casino fundraisers, local golf tournaments and an array of other fundraising activities. The money raised is donated to various causes that benefits programs and services that are offered to Edmonton's thriving communities.

The proud Rotarian has sat on the organization's committees and held the position of President of the West Edmonton Rotary Club from 1999-2000. The Rotary's biggest milestone achievement so far, was implementing a strategy in sending out thousands of its volunteers on an immunization campaign to eradicate polio in third world countries, during its international campaign referred to as Polio Plus. Their next big challenge will be to one day eradicate HIV.

When getting away from the challenges of work and parenting, Lazotte enjoys getting a good work out cycling around town and to work. Lazotte said, "You have to take care of all aspects of your life. So I really enjoy cycling. That's probably my biggest thing. I cycle to and from work all year long. I coach my daughter's soccer team, which is a lot of fun. I'm involved with the Rotary and meeting new and interesting people through that. Just doing things balances out your life. That helps in reducing and keeping down stress."

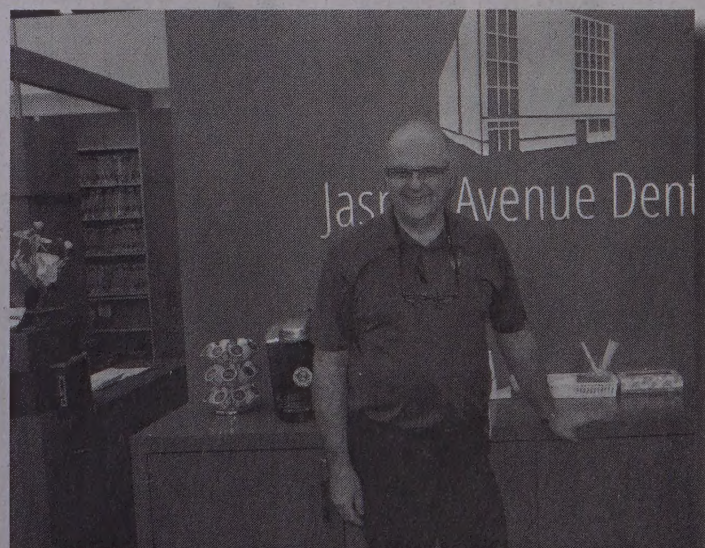
So in the life of Joseph Lizotte, one thing is assured, his aims are never about personal gain, but more about giving back to society in more ways than one.

That as far as he's concerned, balances out with all the friends he's earned that even money can't buy, when you're constantly thinking of everyone's best interests!

Below:

Joseph Lizotte smiles for the camera at his dental office.

Photo by John Zapanis





Edmonton

As members of City Council, we have a goal to end poverty within a generation. It's shared vision of prosperity for all, where every Edmontonian has an equal opportunity to live, work, participate and thrive. Ending poverty benefits us all, and we've started a city-wide conversation about it. Our approaches to ending poverty — even the ways we talk about poverty — are evolving. We know there is no one simple solution. We invite you to raise your voice, share your opinions and be part of this conversation. Let's end poverty together.

www.endpovertyedmonton.ca



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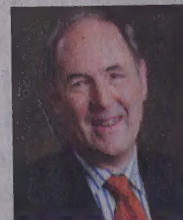
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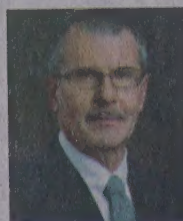
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